

SOCIALISM - OR CLAUSE 6?

Before I set out my criticisms of the Declaration of Principles, as requested by the resolution moved and carried at the meeting of party members held at the Holborn Hall on Sunday, September 12th, there are several things I wish to make clear.

For the benefit of those members who like myself were unable to be present at the meeting the resolution referred to was:—

"THAT THE E.C. CALL UPON COMRADE TURNER TO PUT IN WRITING HIS OBJECTIONS TO THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES, AND THE E.C. CONSIDER WHETHER IT COMES WITHIN RULE 33."

Untrue Statements

It would appear from this resolution that the members who voted in favour of it wanted me to place my criticisms of the Declaration of Principles in order to see whether a charge of action detrimental to the interests of the party could be preferred. To put it mildly this is a very shabby trick, some might even think that it is sharp practice. I should have thought that the only reason for requesting a member to put his views in writing would be for those views to become the grounds for discussion, to adopt those views if considered correct or to put him right if the views are considered incorrect. I can only hope that most members were unaware of this distasteful purpose of this resolution.

It has been said by a number of members that I am opposed to the party, that I am campaigning within the party in order to disrupt it and that I do not put the Socialist case when I am on the platform. May I state at once that not one of these statements is true. If the members who have made these statements really believe them to be true why have they not used the machinery of the

party which exists in order to deal with members who are deemed to have acted in a manner which is considered detrimental to the interests of the party? These accusations must be considered irresponsible unless the members who make them back them up in the manner laid down in the rule book. In case there are members who may be thinking "that where there is smoke there must be fire", I must state my position. I hold that Socialism alone is the solution to the many problems that vex society today.

By Socialism I mean a universal system of society, or way of living, in which no human being, or group of people, stands in a privileged position to others. No group of people will own the means of production, nor will they own things that will be produced. All things will be held in common and all people will have access to things according to their needs and all people will contribute to society according to their abilities. From the standpoint of sex groupings, neither sex will stand in a privileged position to the other. Racially no groupings of people will be privileged, nor stand with power over others. *In short, equality will be the thread running through every conceivable human relationship.*

I hold with the Socialist Party that a person is a socialist who recognises the practicability and desirability of the above objective. I also hold with the Socialist Party that no other organisation in this country has Socialism, as I have outlined it, as its sole objective and therefore membership or support of these other organisations is incompatible with Socialism. A person who claims to be a socialist cannot support war under any circumstances. Nor can a socialist organisation put forward reform programmes in order to obtain members or get support on such programmes. There are of course quite a number of other issues with which I am in agreement with the party, but I think

I have enumerated enough to prove my fitness to retain my membership.

The Object

The criticisms I have of the Declaration of Principles are where, in my opinion, they depart from the objective as set out above. To put it another way, my criticisms are not from the standpoint of an anti-socialist, nor are they criticisms of a non-socialist, nor am I saying that the party is non-socialist, but I am saying that, in my opinion, the Socialist Party could be more socialist in its message to people than it has been during the past fifty years. As far as this contribution of my criticisms is concerned I propose to restrict it to those clauses which deal with action. My criticisms of these clauses spring from my conception of Socialism as stated above and which, to the best of my belief, would be agreed to by most, if not all members. I repeat Socialism means to me a universal system of society in which all human beings stand equally to each other, where all privilege and power of people over other people no longer exists.

Clause Six

My major criticism of this principle is in two parts. The first deals with the words "the working class must organise" in relation to the objective. If the objective is to establish Socialism then only socialists can organise for its establishment, whether these socialists in other fields are workers or capitalists, men or women, American, British, German, etc., black or yellow, is quite irrelevant. The test of being a socialist is solely that of recognising the practicability and desirability of Socialism and of the desire to work for its establishment. I hold that the economic classification, worker or capitalist, plays no part in rendering the people who qualify under the above test fit

or unfit for organising for Socialism. If, of course, we hold that only wage and salary workers stand to gain by the establishment of Socialism, then it is understandable why the appeal is directed to the working class. But if this is the reason why the appeal is directed exclusively to workers then we are at variance with the proposition that Socialism means the emancipation of ALL MANKIND.

The second part of my criticism of this principle is where it states that "conquest of powers of government national and local in order that this machinery including the armed forces of the nation may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation". All governments and their powers exist to perpetuate privilege in one form or another. All forms of privilege carry with them the machinery to maintain the privilege and this machinery is coercive. If we mean by Socialism the emancipation of all mankind, then such an emancipation cannot be achieved by coercion. It can only be brought about by mankind as a whole understanding and wanting this emancipation.

Agent of Emancipation

We cannot convert instruments of oppression into agents of emancipation. The only agent of emancipation of which I am aware is men and women armed with knowledge and desire of Socialism, not soldiers, airmen and policemen armed with bombs, guns and truncheons, nor statesmen armed with lies. We could, however, capture control of the machinery of government including the armed forces and shift oppression from one set of people to another, but if this is not what we want then why retain a clause which makes it appear that we do. Socialists rely upon the socialist understanding of people everywhere in order to make social equality a living reality. Coercion is the doctrine of those who despair of others ever understanding. We cannot rely upon both understanding and coercion.

The whole of the Declaration of Principles leads up to the objective contained in Clause 6, namely that the working class must consciously capture control of the machinery of government. I want to draw your attention to what this phrase is actually postulating; it must mean that the governmental machinery including the armed forces is a constant institution and yet the ideas of the overwhelming majority of people will have so changed that they no longer want

nations, classes, nor any other group antagonisms.

Fundamentals of Capitalism

Are we to understand that the fundamentals of capitalism, including the state machinery, will remain the same as in 1904 and yet changes will take place in people's ideas so revolutionary in character as to want a system of society for which there is no historical precedent? How will these ideas be changed? This question cannot be answered on the postulates of Clause 6. The governmental machinery is a fundamental of privileged society. In the language of the Declaration of Principles, it enables the capitalists to conserve the monopoly of the wealth taken from the workers. But so are the ideas of people fundamental to society, that is why we state that the majority of people must hold ideas of Socialism in order to establish it.

It would appear from the Declaration of Principles generally and Clause 6 in particular that there is no connection between ideas of people and the other factors of capitalism, bearing in mind that the other factors remain fundamentally unchanged but the ideas of people will change revolutionarily. This contradiction shows itself in our statements in the Socialist Standard and on the platform on the subject of Clause 6.

A very small number of propagandists argue we would use the state machine against capitalists and their supporters. A larger number argue that we would use the state machine to pass the first and last law "the abolition of private property". A few argue that we will capture the state in order to abolish it. Every members of the party has at some time or another heard these views expressed from the platform. One thing stands out clearly from all these pronouncements that is that they do not take into account the dynamic character of society, that is that changing ideas move along with changing institutions. I hold that when the mass of people hold socialist ideas there will be no state machine to capture.

Clause Seven

"That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party".

It is evident that the phrase "the party seeking working class emancipation . . ." refers to us. Of course we are seeking working class emancipation but we are seeking the emancipation of *all* mankind and our refusal to compromise with other organisations should not be because they do not express the interests of the working class but solely for the reason that their objectives are not those of establishing a universal system in which all people are equal.

As this clause reads it appears that the interests of the working class and Socialism is one and the same thing. If we mean that Socialism is in the interest of all human beings and workers are human beings, therefore Socialism is in their interests all would be well, but it is evident that this is not what we mean, because capitalists are human beings, but we do not say that the interests of the sections of the capitalist class is the establishment of Socialism.

Not a Class Interest

The first part of Clause 7 is correct—"all political parties are but the expression of class interests". No economic class has for its objective universal social equality; the objectives of both classes and all the sections of these classes are simply to gain at the expense of each other. The interests of capitalists are in opposition to the interests of workers as well as in opposition to each other. This also applies to the interests of the workers. The interest of neither class is Socialism. It seems to me to be absurd to say, as we do, that the interest of the working class is Socialism even though they are unaware of it. It could equally be said of the capitalists that their interest is Socialism but they are unaware of it. Socialists seek to end class society and the struggle between these classes and for us to argue that we represent one class against the other in order to end classes altogether seems to me as nonsensical as the claim that in order to bring about peace we should support war.

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OUR OBJECT AND D. OF P.

Criticisms of the above have been made in the past and are being made again now. I therefore take this opportunity to state my views.

Clause 1, from inductive objective reason on my part, is still axiomatic fact. My study of Capitalism during this period—1904 to 1954—of S.P.G.B. activities, and the few centuries of Capitalism before this period, convinces me that economic wealth is produced by the working class alone. Also that this wage-working-class remain enslaved, because the Capitalist class are owners of the means of living, by their vast majority amount of shareholding. Capitalism has not remained static; its productive powers have developed and increased enormously as a result of competition amongst the rival national capitalist states, for sales of surplus economic commodity wealth in the shrinking world market. The State powers of Capitalism have also increased by Nationalisation of more industries, but more State control of these industries has not lessened the amount of ownership of the means of living by the private shareholding and Government bond-holding Capitalist Class. Government debts, in all countries, to the Capitalist money lenders, increase by the State development of industries, and by the greater expenses on account of the armament competition of the rival national State powers. The Capitalist class continue to live luxuriously on Ground Rent, Interest and Profit and the Working Class continue to exist in poverty on wages or salaries. From this Clause 1, a few correct logical deductions were stated by the founders of the S.P.G.B.

Clause 2 refers to economic antagonism of interests between the Capitalist haves and the Worker have-nots, which is the fundamental basis of the Class Struggle in this present Capitalist system of Commodity-producing society. This Clause 2, in my opinion, is a correct logical deductive conclusion from Clause 1.

Clause 3 and our Party Object both refer to the only method of abolishing the economic antagonism of the two classes in this Capitalist system of Society, and thereby the domination by the Capitalist class owners of emancipation of the working class from

the means of life: by conversion to common ownership of those means for all the world's population. The human race depends on nature's materials scattered unequally throughout the world; therefore the emancipation of the workers of the world from the chains of wage-slavery can only be achieved by common ownership of these natural materials, and by the machinery of production and distribution of human needs being democratically controlled. This, to my mind, is a correct conclusion from the statements of fact that the wage-working class are the next and last class yet to achieve its freedom and their emancipation, and therefore will involve the emancipation of all mankind. The history of Economic and Political changes in Human Societies, since common ownership of property in the means of life, during Primitive Communist Society, was displaced by private ownership of the means of living, proves there is no class remaining to be exploited below the present wage working class. Surely, then, Clause 4 is an accurate statement, and means the end of class rule and classes and exploitation of humans.

Clause 5 states that this final emancipation is the historic duty and task of the working class itself. This clause must be a correct deduction from the fact of antagonism of interest between the two classes in Capitalist society and the statement of facts in Clauses 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Clause 6 refers to the machinery of Capitalist Government, including the civil and armed forces, used to continue the Capitalists' ownership of the means of living and their politically legal robbery of the working wage class, who produce all wealth by applying their physical and mental energies to Nature's materials. Then, surely, the working-class must organise politically to gain power, national and local, in their respective national states, in order to convert the forces of domination and oppression into the agent of emancipation, by ending the parasitic life of this Capitalist system and overthrowing the privileges of the Capitalist class and ending class divisions and classes. This Clause, laid down by the founders of the S.P.G.B., I am in agreement with even in this decade, from my own inductive

objective reasoning and deductive conclusions.

Clause 7 refers to S.P.G.B. hostility to all other parties; but are not all other political parties more hostile to the S.P.G.B., than the S.P.G.B. are to these other political parties? This is because we do not sacrifice our principles for their numbers, and sacrifice our Socialist aim now for a later period. Capitalism has insoluble problems and contradictions which all other parties consider soluble within the framework of this present competitive Capitalist system if we all pull together, workers and capitalists, political parties including the S.P.G.B. Surely all members of the S.P.G.B., should agree that the longer the Capitalist system continues the graver are its problems. Therefore let us work in harmony to put Capitalism in its grave and its problems with it, and let us do our part in Great Britain to end all frontiers of this Capitalist dying system and achieve the aims of World Socialism.

Clause 8. Surely the S.P.G.B. members live in the present, and have had bright and worthy aims laid down by the founders of the S.P.G.B. We are not living in the future yet, we cannot love our enemies now, we have to put up with their parasitic life meantime. We do not aim to exterminate them, but we do not ourselves wish to be exterminated by their wars. We must therefore help to increase Socialist understanding and action, and achieve our political object, firstly; then our peaceful economic object follows almost immediately afterwards. The S.P.G.B., and its companion parties abroad know the problem and the solution, and with conditions becoming easier understood by the working class of the world, will help us to achieve our and their emancipation together, if we do our part now. Some members seem to consider they are capable of re-writing a new version of our S.P.G.B. Object and Declaration of Principles more accurately and in much better and more modern language. I doubt it; perhaps these same few members consider they are capable of re-writing more accurately "Wage Labour and Capital" and "Value, Price and Profit", which were written more than 50 years before 1904; I doubt that also. Do not let us forget how Marx, in "Value, Price and Profit", advised us correctly about causes and effects: and, although Capitalist conditions force us to do many things which are inadequate—almost like trying to hold back the tide—our main concentration of activities is the ending of the Wages System. We must overcome all obstacles.

DAVID LAMOND

THE NATURE OF THE SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

7 — *The Socialist Movement (concluded)*

The tendency towards social equality which characterises the physiology, as it were, of Capitalism, appears also in the still incompletely articulated anatomy, as between sovereign powers or groups. Within the empires, the historical transition from exchange of unequal to exchange of equal values is marked by the stages of contact, conquest, colonisation, condominium. The same transition occurs between rival powers or empires. In both cases it is the intrusion of alien artefacts (through trade) from the more developed economy which starts or hastens the equalising of productive powers and standards of living, and the greater the mass and range of these artefacts, the quicker the assimilation of backward with forward. Germany was "westernised" in 60 years, Japan in 30, Turkey in 10.

War is the ramrod of progress for capitalism, raising the tempo of capital's accumulation. The outcome of competition, war intensifies competition, but we see this only as a vicious circle, for this is how we see Capitalism—going nowhere. War speeds up, with the national economy, the greater mass and more equal diffusion of use-value, and between national powers it speeds the levelling up of productivity and social standards, the more so by hastening the second industrial revolution of plastics and alloys (creation of atoms) which unseats national differences of productive power based on the natural raw materials (coal, iron, oil), when any power can conjure what it needs out of the air.

But intensified war, out of intensified competition produced by war, does not remain extrinsic and epidemic. As the theatre of war becomes more global, and the means and preparation for war becomes more massive, it becomes endemic, dovetailed into the normal economy. What were professional armies become universal C.D.; industrial techniques and technicians become no longer separable from military techniques and technicians; C.O. tribunals become a form of vocational selection. Vishinsky discovers that "war is indivisible" and Eden that "peace is indivisible" just too late to observe that war and peace are indistinguish-

able. Ordinary flesh and blood, however, may forgiveably feel there is still a distinction between the cold and the shooting war, ordinary flesh and blood being short-lived and short-sighted. But the total character of atomic war, because it is therefore permanent (in the sense that "defence measures" are permanent), and because it is totally destructive (more strictly, its destructiveness totally unpredictable), precipitates a series of intergrations and new simplicities which on the one hand holds the shooting war eventually in the deadlock of perpetual check, and on the other hand provides the physical and social apparatus for worldwide "democratic control" and the "social administration of things" which are still lacking.

Growing Equality

The world of the second (atomic) industrial revolution is one in which there is such near equality of productive levels that there is no longer in war the booty of preferential rights to exchange unequal values. War is not the outcome simply of competition between capitals, but of competition in a world where there is significant inequality of productive levels and standards of living. Where rates of exploitation and rates of profit are everywhere equal, and no advantage in foreign investment or spheres of influence, there is no point in destroying a neighbour by a process which not only destroys the neighbour's capital but also his workers and his natural resources, and makes his land an unoccupiable and unapproachable area of dangerous infection. Hence the last major problem of capitalism, the problem of national sovereignty, is now being lifted out of the academies into the field of politics. What the exceptional statesman lacks is not vision but mandate, because the necessary near-equality of national productive and social levels has not yet been reached. Thus sovereignty will not be relinquished by agreement but superseded by institutions extemporised out of the exigencies of war and peace.

The shooting war henceforth, whether, global or local and sporadic, compels the

growth of extra-sovereign institutions far more radical than their puny forebears (the present UNO's and NATO's and ABC's), to clear the poisonous debris of the atom-scorched earth, to control the aftermath of plague and pest, to revive the soil and rehabilitate the migrant millions of evacuees and D.P.'s.

Henceforth the shooting war, or the permanent preparation for it, hastens everywhere the weakening of value relations, even within the field of production itself, military use dominating all else, and this the more easily where there is already extensive State control of industry, and where, therefore, profit has already become more a condition than an aim.

Moreover, atomic military society must henceforth develop the sensitivity of its antennae (of which radar is a precursor) for detecting and locating enemy intention; must develop the higher fidelity and clarity for the means (scrambled, unscrambled, short wave or long) for widely dispersed or minutely localised communication; must develop the electronics for integrating data at a speed which mocks human brain; must develop, in short, the physical apparatus of the efferent-afferent circuits of stimulus and response without which world socialist common ownership is not possible.

Alongside and within the artefacts develops also the social, institutional apparatus essential to democratic administration, which could not work on a world scale by means of delegated representation in series: the final representation would be too attenuated, too remote and too slow, like the brain of a diplodocus which feels a broken leg next Thursday. To be workable it needs not only the physical machine (like the electronic brain which instantly manipulates multitudinous data), but allied with this the social machinery for highly refined referenda. Already the poll (e.g. Gallup) intrudes on the clumsy machinery of constituency meeting and lobbying, as a necessity of the greater mass and density of social life, while at the same time the two-party system of Government is becoming outmoded. The ten-year political stalemate in Britain is a worldwide

phenomenon. In the East there is no Opposition because there is a by-passing (by telescoping) of nineteenth century capitalism, in the West (America, Britain, France, etc.) there is change of personnel without change of policy because within the national physiology of capitalism there is no longer any felt major social problem—the major problem is external, the problem of war and sovereignty.

The military State climax of capitalist evolution hastens the development of the artefacts (and with them the activities of body and mind, the institutions) which integrates society physiologically and anatomically (socially and geographically) — this hastening being essentially the greater momentum of the greater mass of product, while the process itself inheres in capital, in the commodity cell where (in brief and in little) it is the relative diminution of value to the point of irrelevance, and thereafter extrusion, when meek usefulness shall inherit the earth. And the cultural spirit which issues from this integration is concern with the quality of life and labour, marking it off from the pre-history concerned with quantity, with output, value, shares, ownership of means, conspicuous waste, etc.

This sketch of the evolution of Socialism is necessarily brief, and necessarily deals with one part at a time. In social fact the parts are not consecutive but concurrent (and it is the essence of my interpretation of materialism that they concur). The "defect" of the graphic arts is that they are two-dimensional, and the artifices for overcoming that defect are part of the art. Language, having only one dimension, precludes those devices, and as a makeshift for concurrence we have to "bring into relation". For example, the development of powers of unpredictable destruction comes from the atomic revolution which means also worldwide equality of productive levels, which means both equality of retaliation and (because there are then no areas which can be won by lesser means) the impossibility of conquest by means so deadly, and any shooting wars before then can only hasten that equality. Again, without war, sovereignty dies of irrelevance, or is superseded by the aftermath of war. Again, actual or latent conflict of sovereignties hastens the emancipation of use from value within the national economy, and does so simultaneously at points which converge and boost one another: diffusion of use-values out of higher productivity concurs with national defence taxation which helps equalise distribution of value. Again, higher taxation favours diversion of surplus to improving conditions of work, reinforced

both by the reduced pressure of "economic incentive" (social equality in use-values) and by the need of national defence to improve output—and out of these the cybernetics, made possible by electronics, which furthers the replacement of dying economic incentives (quantity) by humane and aesthetic incentives (pleasure in work), and with all of which concurs the less brutally aggressive appetite of capital where profit is a condition rather than an aim, and where the controllers and operators of the capital are no longer hereditary moguls but appointed "in accordance with ability", or enjoying the privilege of ownership less for the kudos and more for the status and the element of creative discretion in work.

Take up any thread, it is woven into every other. All analogies are false, but (given that there is motion as well as matter) there is concurrent change of matter, form and

spirit; there is emergence of the new, not mechanically by the throwing off of dead skin, but out of the skin; and there is precipitation of dewdrops out of air, the coalescence of droplets into streams, and a general convergence of streams towards a focal integration that we call Socialism.

Given motion (and given necessary motion), we can bring prognosis to the aid of history, bring the closing stages of one society in the mind's eye near enough to the emergent stages of the next for the spark of human wish to flash across, knowing what the leap is for, and moved by a human aspiration not an idealist bellyache.

The next (concluding) section will suggest the changes in practical Party activity and policy which, to that end, would enlarge its narrow pre-occupation with political opposition.

F. EVANS.

NOTES ON CRISES (4)

The last article ended by stating that the anarchy of production and the uneven rate of expansion of the various branches of industry i.e. the disproportionality of production, are basic features of all crises. The use of the term "anarchy of production" is not meant to imply that capitalism is a system of economic chaos. On the contrary, as has been shown it is subject to laws and compulsions. What is meant by the term is that the present method of wealth production is not consciously designed for social ends but is one of profit motivation in a highly competitive milieu whose rule is "the invisible hand of the market".

Entrepreneurs do not meet beforehand to regulate and harmonise productive conditions; what happens is that each capitalist or group of capitalists carry out investment decisions without regard to and in ignorance of other capitalists, and consequently they each have an imperfect knowledge of the market for which they are producing. Thus any errors in their calculations can only be revised after the event, i.e. through changes in price levels revealed by the market which are themselves the result of a break in the productive equilibrium.

Now the fact that the different lines of production form part of an interlocking whole and yet the productive activity of these different undertakings are themselves governed by a number of autonomous decisions all being made and carried out at the same

time, must carry as a result a heavy bias towards disproportionality i.e., an uneven rate of expansion between the various branches of industry. Given, then, the planlessness of capitalist production, with its inherent bias towards disproportionality, it can be said that when this uneven rate of expansion of the different branches of industry reaches a certain level, the possibility of a crisis emerges. There may be and usually are a number of complicating factors associated with crises, i.e., the extant supply and demand for labour power or different kinds of labour power; the repercussions on the money market; the rate of interest in new loan capital and the reaction of the banking system as a whole, etc. But whatever the pattern of events a particular crisis may follow it can always be shown in some way or other to be an aspect of disproportionality.

To put the disproportionality aspect of crises concretely—it can be assumed that in the steel industry capitalists have overestimated the demand for their products, i.e., have over-invested. As has already been indicated, in a system such as capitalism only the markets will reveal their error by showing that the products can no longer be sold at a profitable price. In actual fact the market for steel like every other product is itself dependent on the volume of production in all other industrial spheres and cannot therefore be accurately foreseen. In short over

production in steel has occurred due to an accelerated rate of expansion of the steel industry relative to other industries. This element of over-production in steel will cause a sharp decline in the rate of profit leading to a contraction of investment and hence production, thus resulting in reduced demand for commodities such as labour power; iron; coal; transport, etc. This in turn will generate cumulative effects in other undertakings which are linked with the steel industry and who now as a result of the over-expansion of the steel industry experience a deficit of demand for their particular product.

As a result of falling prices and profits in these undertakings, investment will contract and production decline. Pay-rolls will fall and consequently current purchasing power will be lowered, which will then accelerate the process already begun. If the disequilibrating effects arising from this disproportional development of the steel industry are sufficiently widespread then they may initiate a series of events which produces a crisis.

Over-production in one branch of industry can then produce a state of affairs which brings about elements of over-production in other branches of industry and leads to a condition of general over-production. In short, one branch of the economic system has failed to expand proportionally with other branches, and by rupturing the essential conditions of equilibrium, has brought about in these branches a condition of relative over-production which in its general effects is indistinguishable from general over-production. All crises then, are crises of relative over-production. Because particular branches of industry can only expand disproportionately in relation to other branches, to talk of absolute disproportionality and hence, absolute over-production is not only an absurdity but a contradiction in terms. The assertion of some naive under-consumptionists who say that crises are the outcome of too much of everything being produced can then be seen in proper perspective.

It might appear from what has been said that crises emanate only from that department of industry which produces the means of production. Disproportionately of production, leading to a crisis situation can however originate in that other broad department of industry which produces the means of consumption.

Thus in a period of a rapid burst of capital accumulation, manufacturers of consumption goods—or any interested entrepreneur for that matter—may seek to expand their concerns by investing in building; new

factories; machinery, etc. If the transference of labour power and other wealth resources to the industries which manufacture the means of production are considerable, then there will follow a sharp rise in the organic composition of capital, i.e., an increase of constant capital relative to variable capital. The rate of profit will tend to fall and unemployment will appear. This will be followed by a decline in purchasing power and prices in the consumption goods industry will fall.

A lowered rate of profit and a fall in the price level of consumption goods will not of itself produce a crisis. If however, an acute decline in both profits and prices is experienced by those who invest money in the manufacture of finished consumer articles for the reason already outlined, then it follows that over-expansion has taken place. As a result there will be a marked slackening of activity in the trades producing means of consumption. Now such a state of affairs will become crucial if such a slackening of trade activity has a markedly adverse effect on those trades which produce the means of production, i.e., by causing a decline in the demand for their products which of course are dependent on and derived from the trades producing finished consumption goods. In actual fact changes in demand for production goods have much more significance than changes in demand between different lines of articles for consumption in view of the greater durability and expenses of producing the former. A

sharp decline in demand for industrial equipment carries powerful disequilibrating effects.

If the decline is serious enough it will bring about in the constructional and machine making concerns a state of over-production, with its familiar features of falling prices and profits, curtailing of investment and consequently, production, and subsequent decline in employment and consuming power. This in turn will produce serious repercussions on the already declining activity of the trades producing the means of consumption. The conditions of equilibrium will be gravely disturbed and a crisis ensue. It follows then, that a crisis can originate in either of the two major departments of industry—those producing the means of consumption or those producing the means production. But in any case the crisis is in the final analysis the outcome of disproportional development between the two branches of industry.

It may be said that many non-Marxist economic theorists would not in any appreciable way dissent from the above description of crises. Nor could it be said that Marx's views on crises have influenced them to any considerable degree. What can be said is that the development of capitalism has compelled them to a more realistic approach to the dynamics of the system than that favoured by academic theory of a bygone generation. For that reason it is in part an implicit tribute to Marx's work on the subject of crises.

E.W.

(to be continued)

THE SOCIALIST DILEMMA

The theory is current in some quarters that the reason for the Party's lack of conspicuous progress during the last fifty years has been the sterility of its propaganda, or, in other words, the lack of constructive Socialist ideas. We can only infer from this that once the Party commences to give graphic illustrations of a future society, the apathy of people will wither away and "hope the hornblower" appear on an elevated platform in Hyde Park to usher in the new era. Is not this new tactic in the quest for (dare I say it) working class comprehension merely the expression of the failure of propaganda itself to be sufficient to produce the requisite Socialist majority, rather than a failure of the particular form of propaganda used?

Many thousands of people have heard the S.P.C.B., during the half-century it has been

in existence, and digested the main part of the case, yet the force of circumstances has not been strong enough to induce the necessary activity in the desired direction. In fact, social forces in more than 999 cases out of a thousand are far more powerful than any apparent desire on the part of a person for Socialism. The S.P.C.B., and its handful of sympathisers is the exception which proves the rule, as the phrase goes. They form the fractional percentage which has (by chance perhaps) found Socialism the strongest gravitational pull in the social orbit.

The question has now got to be faced as to whether or not the material conditions are ripe enough to induce the socialist revolution; to overcome the opposing forces and weight the scales on the other side. As Marx points out in the Preface to his Critique of Political Economy:—"No social order ever perishes

before all the productive forces for which there is room in it have developed . . ." Looking at Capitalism today, we can see that its growth (if we take Capitalism to be the universal system) is still in its infancy, only part of the world being highly developed on Capitalist lines. Take for example India and China, who are but on the threshold of nationalist industrial Capitalism.

The question the Party must consider is: what will be the dynamic of the revolution? I do not propose to answer it in this article, but only to state the problem. As I have said above, the apparent failure of scientific socialists to induce acceptance of their case warrants a closer examination of Capitalism to try to discover what, if anything, is necessary to make people realise the imperativeness of Socialism.

I do not imply that we must perforce sit back to wait upon some inexorable law of social development to take its predetermined course. That is the mechanistic or metaphysical materialist theory at its worst. But ideas themselves are not strong enough to overcome conditions which are not equitable to them. Witness the Russian revolution, and the attempt on the part of Lenin and his followers to by-pass the inevitable outcome of conditions in Feudal Russia, vis-à-vis the West. In passing, it might be mentioned that the possibility of so doing was one of the main facets of Russian social philosophy during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

There is nothing new in *system building*, which the Party is tentatively casting an eye to. The left wing literature of the last century is full of it, all sterile through being inopportune and for the most part unscientific. More atavistic than revolutionary, they were mostly expressions of distaste for Capitalism in its period of primitive accumulation, and thus doomed to failure. The few *socialistic* tendencies which showed themselves can be explained dialectically by the phrase:—"Every problem bears within it the seeds of its own solution." Some were apparently early ripeners. Nevertheless, to try to repeat the errors of the past at a later stage of Capitalist development is to court the same illusion.

The "socialism" of the rebellious working class during the early years of *industrial* Capitalism was permeated by the condition of the system at that particular time. (Today our view of Socialism is determined by the way Capitalism impinges on us individually. Further proof of immaturity.) It took no account (how could it?) of the necessity of the system to grow and wither when (and not until) it can no longer serve the interests of humanity; ultimately, of worker or capitalist. The working class were only concerned with abolishing *industrialism*; the machine being deemed the enemy of their interests. It was the old question of things as they *appear*, as opposed to things as they *are*. Marx stated at the time that it was not machines, but the *relations of production*, which were the cause of the

trouble, and must receive the blame. It was the alienation of man from the creations of his own energies, which produced this erroneous conception. Only under Socialism can the machine become the servant of man, and man the master of himself; when he has conquered his own society, "and brought pre-history to a close".

Taking the immature "Socialist" activity of the last hundred and fifty years as a guide, we may assume that *Socialism* will in its whole character be determined by the character of Capitalism at the point of transition. With very little or no idea what that will be like, it is a sheer waste of time conjecturing (no matter how interesting, or even how natural that may be) or designing the proverbial "blueprint" of Utopia. For that is all it can be.

The only practical and uncompromising way of intimating Socialist conditions, is to point out the causes of social problems under Capitalism; equate them with private property, and then show as a logical conclusion that with its abolition certain things will also disappear: the state, money, marriage, war, religion, poverty, insecurity, crime, etc., etc., and why.

The task before us then as propagandists is to spread to the utmost of our ability a scientific concept of society, so that—whether or not it attains universal acceptance at the present time—the knowledge will be in the hands, or rather heads, of people, if and when the necessity arises. ELIA

RENUNCIATION AND SOCIALISM

It was Thomas Carlyle in his *Sartor Resartus*, who told us that it is only with "renunciation" that life, properly speaking, can be said to begin. Sakya Muni taught the doctrine of "renunciation" 2500 years ago; he said that individual life was a painful delusion from which men escape by the conquest of individual desire. Self, he said, must be subordinated; self is a method and not an end. The wise of all ages have practised "renunciation" in one form or another. In India, for instance, no religious

teacher can hope for a hearing unless he first renounces the world. The deepest conviction of the Hindus in all ages has been that salvation and happiness are attainable by knowledge. In the famous Bhagavad-gītā, one of the sacred books of the Hindus which is used in lawcourts for taking the oath etc., there is advocated "renunciation" as a means to attain happiness and salvation.

But it is not the only means, for it also says: *The pursuit of action is superior to the*

renunciation of action, meaning by this of course action only that leads to salvation, for it says: *the whole world is fettered by all action other than action for the purpose of sacrifice*. It also states that *renunciation and the pursuit of action are both instruments of happiness*.

Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism in India, also preached "renunciation", but in an extreme form of self-torture and bodily mutilations. Strict asceticism and nudity was

counted by the Jains of Mahāvīra's period (that is, at the time of Buddha) a necessity in order to suppress the dominant impulses and emancipate the soul from Karma, for the acquisition of true knowledge and happiness. The Jains accepted no God or Gods; although unlike the Buddhists they believed that man had a soul, they did not engage in ritual like the Hindus. Their ideas were fundamentally similar to Buddhism and Hinduism in that they were aiming at salvation *here and now* and not hereafter. They all differed in many ways on how to achieve this state of happiness, but were fundamentally in agreement that it must come by the suppression of the dominant impulses.

Jumble of Words

No nation in the world has produced such devout men and such wise thinkers as the Indian philosophers, in the realm of emancipative thinking. For such men thought out such profound truths not for individual gains, but to give a practical message to mankind on how to achieve a way out of a suffering world. Western Philosophy has been for the past 100 years or more nothing but absolute nonsense—three fourths cash and one fourth crazy fancies, all wrapped up in unfathomable language, and like the cuttle-fish with its ink-bag, creating a cloud of darkness around it to prevent people seeing what it is. University philosophy has been nothing but a jumble of words, which still to this day enables men to talk all day without saying anything; hence the Arabian proverb: "I hear the clapping of the mill, but I see no flour."

Sane and Practical

The questions that now arise are: *Where does "renunciation" fit in to scientific explanation of social evolution and human society?* and *Is it really a sane and practical method?* The answer to the first question is that it fits in perfectly; Man's social evolution has been a mental process, which was gradually built up by balancing one motive against another, and suppressing many of his dominant impulses, which were necessary in the earlier stages of his development. He had to "renounce" in order to co-operate freely with his fellow men. His animal instincts, his craving will, his strong passions and desires had to be suppressed in order to achieve a form of civilisation, and this could only be achieved by man "renouncing" his earlier ways of living.

The second question is really answered

from the first, from the fact that human society only became possible by "renunciation" of a certain amount of man's dominant impulses in order that he might knit himself more closely into the whole.

However, it would not be wise to say this was the only factor at work; there were no doubt others, although the others were the conditions for this suppression, not the cause. The cause has to be sought for in man's knowledge, in his sense of guilt: not in his will, nor the will of God. For man, more so than the animal, carries about with him a strong sense of guilt, which enables him to strive after salvation in one sense or another. He no doubt willed like the animal did, the only difference being man willed with knowledge—hence the guilt. The emancipative idea and the religious idea of salvation are fundamentally the same thing, which is nothing but a striving to clear this guilt and injustice.

Why This Suffering?

Man's inborn idea is that he exists to be happy, in spite of the glaring factors of mass suffering all around him (in every step he takes, he is engulfed by suffering in some form or another). Then we hear from him some disquieting remarks such as: *Why all this suffering? Why was I born into all this suffering and bloodshed? Why is not the world a happy one?* To answer such a person all these questions, we would first of all have to know what the world is, to answer how it is. And were you to tell the questioner the truth about such things he might possibly hang you or cut your throat.

The third question is no doubt answered fully from the first and second, the proof being that modern civilisation, bad as it is in a great many ways, is yet a long way from the jungle.

How then does all this concern Socialism and the establishment of a class-less society? I answer, it concerns Socialism very much indeed, for without "renunciation", in some form or other, Socialism can only remain a myth. For if our present confusion must be turned into future order we must not be so foolish to expect such order to come down from the high heavens, nor just from the change in production and distribution. They no doubt will be the conditions for such order in a class-less society, but certainly not the cause. For there can be no doubt about it, "action and renunciation" will be the prime movers in bringing such a society into existence.

There has been a great deal of rubbish and nonsense printed by so-called socialists in the past, as well as in the present, on how Socialism will come about. A great deal of it came from dreamers, hysterical materialists, and also from some scientific materialists, who were running about with a key that was getting rather rusty as time went by. We have men in the party just now who would like very much to tell us all pretty stories on how beautiful and wonderful Socialism will be, but find themselves in a similar position to Dante when he was looking for material for his heaven: his hell was perfect, for his material was scattered all about him. It is not a wise policy to be over-optimistic in our writings about social evils and how they will be abolished, as if they could be all solved just like an arithmetical problem by adding or subtracting. This is the reasoning of a child, not a grown man. And the quicker we grow up and realize this, the better.

Just at present there is an Indian ascetic named Viroba Bhare, a prominent figure in that country just now, who says his aim is to transform the money-based socio-economic structure into a non-possessing and exploitation-free society. To hear of such views coming from that land of "renunciation" should tend to make even the most dumb think twice before they start criticising all "ascetics" as fools and madmen. For in India the religious life has always been regarded as a journey and search for truth. Even the most orthodox and priestly programme admits this. And why should we be so foolish to criticize such devout religious life, especially when it is in line with scientific thought, and also the means of attaining Socialism — that is, by action and renunciation.

R. SMITH (Dundee)

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